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Flanagan or Most - Interior 5634

SURVEY SHOWS CONTINENTAL WATERFOWL TREND HITS ELEVEN-YEAR LOW

Figures derived from the winter survey are considered with other information in preparing recommendations for the fall waterfowl hunting season. Other information comes from kill and wing surveys, a breeding ground survey, and a nesting success survey. The latter two studies are conducted during May, June, and July. These surveys cover intensively the waterfowl breeding areas on most of the North American Continent.

On the basis of birds observed during the January survey, the total continental waterfowl population is down 14 percent from last year and 9 percent from a 13-year average. Ducks were down 13 percent from last year and 10 percent down from the long-range average. The total number of geese was down 8 percent from last year, but was slightly above the 13-year mark.

A comparison of the number of birds seen in 1961 and 1962 indicates that on a continental basis: Blue geese are down 39 percent; redhead ducks, down 37 percent; Atlantic brant, down 53 percent; mallards, down 23 percent; coot, minus 24; pintail, down 14. Canada geese were below the 1961 figure, but well ahead of the long-time average. Scaup were up 15 percent, and snow geese, 9 percent. The whistling swan, which is not a legally hunted species, is 30 percent under the 1961 figure.

Final figures by flyways indicate that the total number of waterfowl observed in the Pacific Flyway was 8 percent lower than in 1961, that puddle ducks were down 7 percent, but divers were up 15 percent. The overall total of ducks indicates a decline of 5 percent. Geese were up 11 percent.

In the Central Flyway, the overall picture indicates a drop of 22 percent in total waterfowl. Divers were down 17 percent; puddlers, 27; and geese down 13 percent.

Total number of waterfowl observed in the Mississippi Flyway was 15 percent below 1961 observations. Puddle ducks were down 22 percent, but divers were up 5 percent. Geese were 19 percent below 1961.

Observations in the Atlantic Flyway showed the total number observed was 15 percent below sightings of the previous year. Geese were down 23 percent; puddle ducks, down 11 percent; and diving ducks, unchanged.

Mexico observations showed a decline in total waterfowl of 12 percent, but a 59 percent increase of divers. Scaup were up 88 percent; redhead ducks, down 62 percent; baldpate, down 59 percent; and gadwalls, off 35 percent.